

A CENTURY OF BRISBANE JOURNALISM

[By CLEM LACK, B.A., Dip. Jour.]

(Read at the Monthly General Meeting of the Historical Society of Queensland, Inc., on 22nd March 1951.)

As this is the Jubilee year of Federation, it may be appropriate, regardless of chronological sequence, to preface this paper with a reference to one of the more obvious influences of Federation upon journalism, in Brisbane as elsewhere in Australian capitals. This was the fact that the newspapers for the first time ceased to be almost exclusively preoccupied with local politics and happenings.

To an increasing extent, the feeling of isolation, of exclusiveness as between separate and independent colonies, was broken down. Newspapers were keenly interested in this new Federal relationship between sister States, and this interest was of course a reflection of the public interest. The Press of the mainland States became conscious that they were organs of a nascent national opinion as well as the recorders of the news of the day, and a new national note becomes apparent in the editorials. Intense interest was shown in the first Federal elections, which were held on 31st March 1901. In the first fine careless rapture of nationhood, the Federal Parliament was rather like a new toy. Considerable space was devoted to its debates in the Brisbane Press, and the reports were eagerly devoured by readers. Other significant dates in that memorable year of Federation are worth recording. On 7th February, a contract was let for the construction of the present Executive Building, one of the most magnificent examples of architecture in Australia. On 6th March, the fifth contingent of Queensland troops left for the South African War, and on 20th May the Duke and Duchess of York landed in Brisbane, the foundation stone of the new Anglican Cathedral being laid by the Duke of York on 22nd May.

The early years of the present century were progressive ones for Queensland journalism. In contrast to to-day, with only two metropolitan dailies, one morning and one evening journal, there were in 1903,

when Brisbane had a population a fourth of what it is to-day, two morning dailies and one afternoon daily, and in addition several weekly publications, and by 1912, a fourth daily, Brisbane's second evening newspaper, was established.

Although the makeup of newspapers in the first twenty years of the present century, with small headlines and columns of type ranged side by side in an unbroken expanse and few pictures to relieve the monotony of the printed page, was less attractive than to-day's streamlined journalism, the reading public was given a wide news cover. Much more space was given to political news and Parliamentary reports than is printed to-day and much less space was given to sport and social gossip. The editorial writing invariably was of a high standard. Until well into the thirties, both morning newspapers gave up to two columns of leaders daily, usually three leaders being published with a single leader on Saturday, generally of a literary character. It was the practice for both morning newspapers, the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail," to publish well-written two-page literary supplements. The "Courier" supplement was among the best of its kind in the Commonwealth, regular contributors being Dr. F. W. S. Cumberae-Stewart, Fred. J. Broomfield, Nettie Palmer, and other noted writers. The "Courier's" Saturday literary leader was an outstanding feature in contemporary journalism. For some twenty years it was the regularly weekly contribution of that gentle and scholarly cleric, the late Rev. J. Scott Macdonald, M.A.

In technical processes and in news gathering agencies there has, of course, been a tremendous development since the year of Federation. But it is worth recording that the old "Courier" company was well in the van of progress, and second to no other Australian newspaper, even in the closing years of the last century, in its enterprise. As far back as the early eighties, the "Courier" installed two Hoe rotary presses, the most modern of their kind at that time, each capable of printing 10,000 copies of an eight-page newspaper an hour. By 1887, even these fast presses were neither fast enough nor big enough, and as a result a four-roll press was installed by a Yorkshire firm, capable of printing 50,000 eight-page copies an hour, or 25,000 twelve or sixteen page papers, or 12,000

thirty-two-page papers an hour. This press was designed and enlarged in 1913, converting it into two three-roll machines and, incidentally, into the longest printing machine in the world, with an overall measurement of sixty feet. These great presses were superseded by two eight-roll Duplex tubular presses purchased in the United States by the late J. J. Knight in 1926. At the time they were installed in the basement of the old "Courier" building, under the supervision of the late Mr. W. J. Buzacott, editor of the "Queenslander," these presses were the last word in mechanical wizardry, capable of printing, cutting, and folding in simultaneous operation up to sixty-four pages, at a maximum speed of 60,000 copies an hour.

They were in their turn superseded, after the merger of the two morning papers in 1933, by the giant Goss presses which now print the "Courier-Mail" and the "Sunday Mail," although these were not actually installed until about 1937. It is interesting to note that the Duplex presses are still doing excellent service. They were purchased by the late W. J. Manning, proprietor of the Mackay "Daily Mercury," and continue to print the "Mercury" to-day. It is a far cry from 1951, the Jubilee Year, with our streamlined newspapers served by a network of cable, radio, and wireless photo services from every corner of the world, to 20th June 1846 when journalism had its humble beginnings in Brisbane. Just how humble that beginning must have been can be gauged from the fact that when the "Moreton Bay Courier" first appeared the list of guaranteed subscribers did not exceed 100 persons. There were only 2,258 white persons in the whole of the Moreton Bay district of New South Wales. Population of Brisbane was 829 (483 on the north side of the river and 346 on the south side). When it is considered that the great majority of those 800 persons could not have been far from being illiterate, the launching of a weekly newspaper at 6d. a copy must be regarded as a courageous undertaking. James Swan, who had been a compositor on Dr. Lang's newspaper, "The Colonist," and also on the "Empire" under Henry Parkes, has been credited as founder of the "Moreton Bay Courier," but it is clear that the initiative came from Arthur Sydney Lyon. The prominent part played by Lyon and his premier place as pioneer of journalism in Queensland, seems to have been overlooked or mini-

mised. Swan was a printer, not a journalist, and was solely responsible for the mechanical side of production. William Coote in his "History of Queensland" makes it clear that Lyon, with some difficulty, prevailed upon Swan to become associated with him as printer and publisher. Swan brought a small hand press from Sydney and the first copy of the "Moreton Bay Courier" was printed in a garret in a building at the corner of Queen and Albert Streets, afterwards known as the North Star Hotel, and twenty years later as the Australian Hotel. Henceforth, except for brief appearances of a few rivals, the history of Brisbane journalism is the history of the "Brisbane Courier" until the establishment of an evening paper, the "Brisbane Telegraph," in 1872.

First issue of the "Moreton Bay Courier" was of four pages demy folio, four columns to a page. To visualise the conditions when Queensland's first newspaper appeared and place it in the contemporaneous historical background, 1846 was a memorable year for the history books. It was the year of the victories of Aliwal and Sobraon which consolidated Britain's Indian Empire; it was the year of the Irish Famine; the year of the repeal of the Corn Law and the beginnings of free trade; it saw the beginning of Imperialist expansion by the United States in the war against Mexico and the annexation of Mexican Territory. In New Zealand British redcoats were fighting the brave and warlike Maoris. Australia in 1846 was an integral part of the Empire to a much greater extent than it is to-day; the Statute of Westminster was far away. Militarily, it was one of the commands of the British Army, and the troops in Australia and New Zealand in 1846 included the 11th, 58th, 65th, 9th, and 99th regiments. No detachment was serving in Brisbane in 1846; Australia was being denuded of troops for the Maori Wars. Gold had not yet been discovered in Australia; Port Phillip district was a part of New South Wales and five years off becoming the colony of Victoria. The Government in Sydney was preparing to found a new colony at what is now Gladstone, to be abandoned in the following year. The great pastoral hegira had spread out over the Darling Downs, where a few squatters had parcelled out vast kingdoms for themselves; others had trekked their way to the Upper Brisbane and across to Wide Bay.

The infant newspaper of Moreton Bay could not depend upon a telegraphic service with the other colonies, nor upon a cable service with England. Those were facilities as yet undreamed of. Source of information for the "Courier" were the Sydney papers brought by infrequent steamer. Items that were considered to be of interest to the people in the Moreton Bay district were reprinted. Later, so that people in the homeland might know how the settlers in Queensland were faring "A Summary for England" was published. In the first volume of the "Moreton Bay Courier" there is evidence that the Moreton Bay settlers were keenly interested in the explorations by Ludwig Leichhardt, for on 19th September 1846 was issued a supplement "with lectures delivered by Leichhardt at the School of Arts in Sydney."

The partnership between Lyon and Swan did not long survive. Friction was caused by the fact that in the heated politics of the day the two proprietors took opposite sides. Lyon, the editor, favoured the squatters and the reinstitution of transportation, and Swan, the printer and publisher, backed by the indefatigable Dr. Lang, as hotly opposing it. Consistency of policy must have been difficult. The two parted company in 1847, when Swan took sole control, and thereafter the "Courier" advocated with enthusiasm the causes of anti-transportation and Separation.

In July 1850 Lyon became editor of the "Moreton Bay Free Press," the second newspaper to be published in Brisbane, of which Henry Buckley was proprietor. The "Free Press" was the mouthpiece of the squatting interest; it only lasted a few years while the hotly contested transportation question was being agitated. A bitter inkslinging war was conducted between the two papers, no doubt quills being sharpened by the animosity existing between Lyon and Swan. Lyon left the "Free Press" in 1885 to become editor of the "North Australian," published at Ipswich; and three years later he became founder and editor of the "Darling Downs Gazette," first established at Drayton. Thus, Lyon has the distinction of having been the founder of the first four newspapers in Queensland. Lyon sold the "Gazette" to William Henry Byers, a printer, who removed the printing plant to Toowoomba. Lyon, thereafter, makes his exit from Queensland

journalism. He made his home at Cleveland, where he died on 22nd October 1861 at the age of forty-four.

William Wilks took over the editorship of the "Courier" in 1853. Wilks was a scholarly man, and old "Courier" files show that the paper had a literary flavour. Wilks wrote the leaders, and also was the author of much satirical verse under the noms-de-plume of James Arrowsmith and Cordwainer. One such poem in mock heroic style is "The Raid of the Aborigines," describing in comic vein Moppy's war against the squatters of the Lockyer. Wilks was the great champion of Separation, and he presented an extremely able case through the leading columns of the "Courier." He retired from the position in 1859, and returned to Sydney where he was for some time engaged on the Sydney "Empire" and the "Evening News." For several years he contributed to the "Courier" a weekly letter under the heading News and Notes by a Sydney Man. While in Brisbane he was honorary secretary to the Separation Movement committee, and when he revisited Brisbane in 1864, a meeting of 100 citizens presented him with a testimonial and a silver cup in recognition of his great service in the cause of Separation.

Most notable of the early Brisbane journalists was Theophilus Parsons Pugh, who was editor of the "Courier" from 1859 to 1861. Pugh had arrived in Brisbane in 1853 as local correspondent for the Sydney "Empire," Sir Henry Parkes's newspaper. Pugh succeeded Lyon as editor of the "Moreton Bay Free Press." The "Free Press" was published in a small wooden building in Albert Street, near Elizabeth Street.

The "Courier" in 1851 shifted its offices to premises on the corner of George and Charlotte Streets. The old building still stands. For many years it was the headquarters of the Johnsonian Club and until latterly it was the premises of the Elizabeth Kenny Clinic.

Pugh quarrelled with the anti-Separation policy of the "Free Press" and went to the "Courier" as editor, printer and publisher. Two years earlier, in 1857, he had succeeded Wilks as honorary secretary of the Separation Committee. He was an able and fearless journalist and under his capable control the "Courier," which in 1858 had become a bi-weekly and in January

1860 a tri-weekly, attained to the dignity of daily publication in 1861, shortly after it had been acquired by the late T. B. Stephens.

The "Courier" had shared in the chequered career of the colony. It had changed hands three times, but throughout it had held its emphatic policy of pro-Separation, anti-transportation, and anti-squatter. Its circulation had risen from 200 in 1847 to 1,000 in 1858, notwithstanding the opposition of the "Free Press," which was the peer of the "Courier" in vituperative journalism. It had from its establishment fought vigorously in the best interests of the colony. It sought the establishment of the area north of Tweed River, or the Clarence River, as a separate colony; it sought the complete abandonment of the convict system in the territory which became the new colony; and it sought a policy of land development which would ensure the closer settlement of the country.

"Courier" compositors of the sixties of last century were skilled craftsmen. Some of them had received their technical training in the great daily and weekly newspaper offices of London, Liverpool, and Manchester. One intelligent old comp. named Boyd frequently contributed leaderettes to the "Courier," the subject being chosen by the editor. The old man never reduced his thoughts to writing, but simply stood at his frame, and set the matter out of the case of type in front of him. The late Charles Melton, who in 1926 completed sixty-eight years of continuous service with the old "Courier," recalled that he knew only two other men who could do this. One was the late C. H. Buzacott, and the other was the late Angus Mackay, the first editor of the "Queenslander," who had formerly been a compositor on the "New York Tribune" when Horace Greeley was editor. Another notable compositor of the early days was Thomas Wontner. I glean from the reminiscences of Mr. Melton that Wontner came to the old "Courier" office in the early sixties, and after working as a compositor for a year or two, was appointed head reader. In the seventies of last century the bells of St. John's first Cathedral were, by order of the Bells Committee, hung in a high wooden tower only a few yards distant from the old "Courier" office at the corner of George and Charlotte Streets. The bellmen practised ringing the chimes one or two nights a week, and because of the din made by the

clanging of the bells on those occasions, Wontner was unable to hear some of the words read to him by his copyholder. The confused sounds, recalled Mr. Melton, were particularly annoying on a hot night, with the thermometer well up in the panting nineties and his clammy collar clinging to his perspiring neck. Wontner was a mildmannered, patient, and considerate man, yet when the bells were particularly vociferous he was heard to declare that it would afford him much pleasure to hear that the members of the committee were, like the bells—hung.

In March 1860 the "Queensland Guardian," successor of the "Free Press" as the journal of the squatting interest, was established by Fairfax and Wight and became for a time a formidable rival to the "Courier." It was published, like its contemporary, three times a week, becoming a daily in 1862. In 1869 it was taken over by the "Courier."

When Pugh retired from the editorship of the "Courier" he began in May 1863 publication of a weekly newspaper, "The Weekly Herald," which appeared every Saturday from the "Guardian" office. It is interesting to note that when James Bonwick came to write on the "Early Struggles of the Australian Press," and more particularly about the Queensland newspapers, he found in the British Museum a volume of the "Weekly Herald," commencing with No. 7, published on 2nd January 1864. From what Coote says, it appears to have been a weekly of some literary pretensions, and somewhat in advance of its time. It had a good selection of colonial and English news, short stories, some poetry, a political article by "Meeanchin," and considerable space was devoted to stock and cotton cultivation. The career of the "Herald" was brief; it was purchased by the "Guardian." Pugh was also the first publisher of the Queensland Government Gazette from the jobbing office of the "Courier." He continued to print the "Gazette" until the appointment of W. C. Bellbridge to the official post of Government Printer. Pugh's greatest claim to fame, however, is the publication of Pugh's Almanac, first published in 1858 as a sheet almanac and annually in book form from 1859 to 1927. He entered the Second Queensland Parliament as member for North Brisbane, and was chairman of Committees in 1867 and 1868. He was after-

wards Police Magistrate, in turn, at Goondiwindi, Rockhampton, Warwick, and Bundaberg.

In the sixties and seventies a bewildering profusion of newspapers made their appearance in Brisbane. It would certainly seem that there was no scarcity of the necessary capital and enterprise, but in almost all instances these journalistic ventures were short-lived. Of particular interest is the fact that three new daily newspapers made their appearance in the four years from 1868 to 1872. The "Queensland Express" was begun in 1868 by W. C. Belbridge and R. T. Atkin, the latter the first member for Moreton in the Queensland Parliament. Robert Travers Atkin, a cultured Irishman, died on 25th May 1872. A fine monument, erected by the Hibernian Society of Queensland, marks the graves of Robert Travers Atkin and his sister Miss Grace Atkin in the rear of the rectory of St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Sandgate. Originally a bi-weekly, the "Express" was then published three times a week, and on 31st March 1870 it was published daily. It failed to win public support and ceased publication in March 1871. Successor to the "Express," which was published in Queen Street, near the Bank of New South Wales, was the "Colonist," established by R. T. Atkin, in association with W. O'Carroll and W. W. Rutledge. Published on the same press which had printed the "Express," it made its first appearance on 7th June 1871. O'Carroll had arrived in Brisbane with his wife and family by the ship Chatsworth in 1862. Soon after his arrival he contributed to the "Guardian" a number of letters on Irish immigration, and he subsequently joined the "Guardian," of which for a time he was editor. Then for a brief period he joined the "Courier" staff, leaving that journal to start the "Colonist" in conjunction with R. T. Atkin and W. W. Rutledge. Of O'Carroll's later association with the "Courier" as editor more anon. Death of R. T. Atkin brought about the close of the "Colonist," and although it was continued for a time as a tri-weekly O'Carroll in 1872 sold out his interests to a new company which had decided to launch an evening newspaper. This company was the Telegraph Newspaper Company, and on 1st October 1872 the "Telegraph" was first published, at a price of one penny per issue.

When the "Telegraph" first appeared it was a

four-page publication. It was then printed in offices near the Bank of New South Wales at the corner of George and Queen Streets—the same offices where the “Express” and the “Colonist” had been published. Later, adjoining premises on the site now occupied by Barry and Roberts were purchased. The two buildings were eventually demolished and the present stores of Barry and Roberts erected. The present “Telegraph” building was drawn to the design of Mr. Geo. Cowlshaw, who, though not on the original board of directors, played a leading part with his brother Mr. James Cowlshaw in the early and later control of the company. Mr. Geo. Cowlshaw was managing director for an unbroken period of twenty years from 1893 until his death in 1913. Mr. James Cowlshaw filled the position for a three-year term from 1917. The first chairman was Mr. J. K. Handy and the early directorate included names which have continued to be associated with the company through the years. One of the early chairmen of directors was Mr. F. T. Brentnall, grandfather of the present chairman, Mr. D. F. Harris. First editor of Brisbane’s first evening newspaper was Mr. T. P. Pugh. He was followed by A. M. Francis, George Hall, George Woolnough, Dr. F. W. Ward, and T. W. Heney. Dr. Ward, an outstanding journalist, had been formerly editor of the Sydney “Daily Telegraph” and the “Brisbane Courier,” and Mr. Heney had been editor of the “Sydney Morning Herald” before coming to Brisbane. Another name that was to become notable was that of Nat Gould, celebrated writer of racing novels, who was sporting writer for the “Brisbane Telegraph” as far back as 1885. The “Telegraph,” which throughout its existence had been a broadsheet, became a tabloid early in 1948. In 1876 the “Telegraph” began publication of a weekly journal, “The Week,” which survived until the middle nineteen thirties.

Editors of the “Courier” in the sixties and seventies were D. F. T. Jones and W. A. O’Carroll. Jones, who had been an expert shorthand writer, had been trained in the office of Gurney and Sons, shorthand writers to the British Government at Westminster. He came out to Australia as a young man in his twenties, and spent several years on the Victorian diggings. In 1858, when he had been six years in Victoria, he began his career in journalism as a reporter on the “Melbourne Argus.” In 1863 he came to Queensland

to join the staff of the "Courier" and subsequently became editor. He severed his connection with the "Courier" in 1867 and entered the service of the Queensland Government. He was appointed Parliamentary shorthand writer in June 1871, and when Mr. William Senior, head of the staff, resigned and went to England in April 1881, Mr. Jones became his successor, holding the position until his death on 6th October 1892. Mr. William O'Carroll, as previously mentioned, had joined the "Courier" after a period as editor of the "Guardian," but left the "Courier" in 1869 to become associated with the "Colonist." After the sale of that newspaper to the new Telegraph company, Mr. O'Carroll returned to the "Courier" and continued as editor until 1883. He died at his home, at Enoggera, on 16th May 1885.

The "Courier," together with the weekly journal "The Queenslander," which had been established in 1866, was sold in 1873. The purchasers at the price of £15,000 were Gresley Lukin, E. J. B. Browne, and W. Thornton, who styled themselves The Brisbane Newspaper Company. It was a great milestone in the history of the "Courier." Gresley Lukin, who was editor-in-chief and managing director from 1873 to 1880, was a man of considerable literary gifts and organising ability. He bent his energies towards improving the literary standard of both papers, and the best literary talent in Australia and New Zealand was engaged to write for the "Courier" and "Queenslander," which became one of the outstanding weeklies of the day in Australian journalism. Celebrated names associated with the "Courier" and "Queenslander" at this time were W. H. Traill, the editor, whose "Specialities" in the "Queenslander" became a feature, and Ernest Favenc, who were on the full-time staff, and contributors included Marcus Clarke, author of "For the Term of His Natural Life," and Brunton Stephens, the poet. Traill, after leaving Brisbane, edited the "Sydney Mail" for a time and then became associated with the "Sydney Bulletin," which had been founded by J. F. Archibald and John Haynes in January 1880, the first issue appearing on the last day of the month. For some years in the eighties, Traill took over the editorship of the "Bulletin" from Archibald.

W. E. Fitzhenry, writing in the Red Page of the "Bulletin" on 1st February 1950, records that Archi-

bald, writing of Traill, said: "Before Traill's day, we were puny little paragraphists—hurlers of squibs merely. From his time onwards "The Bulletin" became a solid political and social power."

Fitzhenry also tells us, in a very excellent and full account of the history of the "Bulletin," that among Traill's best services to the "Bulletin," to journalism, and to Australia were the engagements of Livingstone Hopkins ("Hop") and Phil May as artists.

Favenc also deserves special mention. He was a brilliant writer, explorer, and a first-class bushman. Favenc led the "Queenslander" Transcontinental expedition of the late seventies. Gresley Lukin promoted the expedition which had as its purpose the making of a survey of the territory between Blackall and Port Darwin in order to determine the type of country and the practicability of constructing a transcontinental railway between the two points. The expedition, in charge of Favenc, left Blackall on 19th July 1878, and struck the South Australian telegraph line on 12th January 1879, reaching Darwin the following day. The expedition was successful in its objects, but the project never materialised.

In December 1880, Gresley Lukin sold his interest in the "Courier" to Charles Hardie Buzacott, a name which is famous in metropolitan and provincial journalism in Queensland. Mr. Lukin engaged in journalism in Sydney for a time, but returned to Brisbane and established, with J. G. Drake and others, "The Boomerang," of which more anon.

Mr. Lukin was one of the three founders of the Queensland Royal National Association, the others being P. R. Gordon and John Fenwick. In the nineties, Mr. Lukin went to New Zealand, where he was special correspondent for several Australian newspapers. On the death of Mr. E. T. Gillon, in 1906, Mr. Lukin was offered and accepted the editorship of the "Wellington Post," a position he held until his death.

"The Daily Observer," originally established in Ipswich as a bi-weekly, was removed to Brisbane and brought out as a daily in 1878 under the editorial control of Archibald Meston. Meston was one of the most remarkable men in Australian journalism and literature. When I joined the "Courier" in 1922, Meston was still a colourful—one might almost say flamboyant—figure around the city. He had a mane of silky white

hair, and a rakish moustache, and sported an immense cameo brooch beneath a jaunty bow tie. This, with a broad-brimmed hat, gave him the hybrid appearance of an artist from the Latin Quarter and a prosperous rancher from the American West. He was proud of his hand grip, the muscular strength of which he tried out on everyone he met, to their acute discomfort. Besides being a brilliant journalist he was also a geologist and explorer. The late General Spencer Browne says of him in "A Journalist's Memories": "... Meston could swing an axe with the best of bushmen, take a turn with the gloves with the smartest professional, lift weights with a Sandow, spin out columns of vivid glowing prose, write a little poem reminiscent of the sweet things we dullards read in the Greek Anthology, or lampoon in satirical verse an opponent in controversy." It should also be added that Meston was an authority on aboriginal language and tribal customs.

Spencer Browne, who had been editor of newspapers at Townsville and Cooktown, succeeded Meston as editor of the "Observer" towards the end of February 1881. He was then barely twenty-five. Proprietors of the "Observer" were Thomas McIlwraith, then Premier of Queensland, and B. D. Morehead, and Perkins, who were also members of the government of the day. The "Observer" office was at the corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets. Leader writers included J. G. Drake, of the Hansard staff, later a barrister and Crown Prosecutor and destined to give distinguished service in the Queensland Legislative Assembly and the Federal Senate, and as a member of the first Federal Government with the portfolio of Postmaster-General. Others were Mr. Robert Nall, also of the Hansard staff and later sub-editor of the "Sydney Daily Telegraph," and William Coote, a brilliant writer and historian who wrote an excellent history of Queensland.

A company was formed to take over the "Observer" from McIlwraith, Morehead, and Perkins for £10,000. William Coote became editor and the "Observer" moved into a new brick building near the old Town Hall site in Queen Street, about where Edwards and Lamb, drapers, later established themselves. It did not flourish, however, and a year later was bought by C. H. Buzacott, then managing partner of the "Courier" and "Queenslander"—the Brisbane

Newspaper Co. Ltd.—and moved to the “Courier” office. The “Observer” was published as an evening newspaper with a separate editorial staff and Spencer Browne was appointed editor. The “Observer” continued as an evening edition of the “Courier” until well into the 1920’s.

Notable “Courier” editors in the seventies and eighties were William O’Carroll, Carl A. Feilberg, and William Kinnaird Rose. Kinnaird Rose, who was editor from January 1888 to November 1891, had been war correspondent for the “Scotsman” in the Russo-Turkish War of 1876-1877. After leaving Queensland, he returned overseas and became war correspondent with the Greek Army in the war against Turkey. Spencer Browne described him as “a tall breezy chap with a flowing red beard, and a picturesque figure walking down Queen Street of a summer afternoon, his beard dividing and blowing back over his shoulders, and clad in light coat and slacks, with a bright blue cummerbund nine inches deep.” He was inordinately proud of his red beard, as proud as the celebrated Barbarossa. The legend is told of him that one night after a convivial party in the Parliamentary refreshment room, Rose went to sleep on the balcony. While he slept a prankish member neatly shaved off one side of his beard.

When Spencer Browne joined the “Courier” staff in 1889, O’Carroll and then Walter J. Morley filled the editorial chair of the “Observer.” Morley was succeeded by J. J. Knight, who specialised in municipal affairs. Knight was the last of the separate “Observer” editors, the “Observer” passing to the direction of an editor-in-chief, who was, of course, editor of the “Courier.” In after years Mr. Knight, an outstanding journalist, became editor of the “Courier” (from 6th May 1906 to 3rd June 1916), and subsequently became chairman of directors and managing director. He wrote a valuable historical work, “In the Early Days,” and also edited Nehemiah Bartley’s “Opals and Agates.” He died in the late 1920’s.

By 1899 the “Courier” had moved to its fine new building in Queen Street on the corner of Edward Street. The “Courier,” later the “Courier-Mail” after the merger of the “Daily Mail” and the “Courier” in 1933, remained in this building until the erection of the present “Courier-Mail” building which was occu-

pied in 1937, having been built on the site of the demolished "Daily Mail" building.

Newspapers sprouted like mushrooms in Brisbane in the eighties, but did not long survive. Among additions to the Brisbane Press mentioned in Pugh's Almanac for 1881 are: "Brisbane Evening News," issued as an evening daily from the "Courier" office, and the "Telephone," issued on Saturdays. The "Evening News" was replaced by the "Observer," of which mention has been made earlier. Other publications were the "Farmer and Planter," the "Leader," the "Southern World," the "Guardian" (no connection with the present journal of that name), the "Figaro" (all published on Saturday), the "Era," published on Wednesdays, and the "Boomerang," published on Saturday night, and eagerly rushed by the theatre-going crowds. The "Boomerang" was a bright, well illustrated, radical journal edited by J. G. Drake, and specialising in political and satirical comment. Gresley Lukin was a leading figure in the direction of the "Boomerang."

Most interesting fact connected with the "Boomerang" is that for a time the celebrated A. G. Stephens, of the "Bulletin," was a contributor. Alfred George Stephens, an "old boy" of the Toowoomba Grammar School in the 'eighties, was on the staff of the "Gympie Miner," an afternoon newspaper published three times a week. One day, the sardonic humour and pithy style of some paragraphs in the "Miner" caught the eye of Gresley Lukin, and he induced the twenty-three-year-old Stephens to become principal literary contributor to the "Boomerang."

A.G.S. was the man who created the famous Red Page of the "Sydney Bulletin" and established himself as arbiter, counsellor, and guide in the brave new world of Australian national literature of the 'nineties and nineteen hundreds. Stephens was induced by J. F. Archibald to join the "Bulletin" staff at the end of 1893, and he instituted the Red Page on 8th August 1896, with an article on Henry Lawson, who had just published "While the Billy Boils."

W. E. Fitzhenry, writing in the "Bulletin" on 1st February 1950, says: "It was A.G.S., the Three-initialled Terror, as Joseph Furphy ('Tom Collins') called him, who founded and edited the Red Page for ten years. From August 1896 until October 1906 when he left the 'Bulletin' in 'a huff and a hurry' to open a

bookshop in Hamilton Street, Sydney, and to revive the 'Bookfellow,' he was, as it were, the Chief Justice of Literature in Australia. He wrote as he pleased and suffered no interference from his superiors. The Red Page was under his absolute control. He used it as a domain in which to preach his generally sound views on literature. He pricked many bubbles, but he encouraged and fostered scores of young writers who showed sincerity, who had something to say, and who knew how to say that something . . . Archibald was a superb sub-editor in the sense that he could compress a shapeless twenty lines into a glittering half-dozen, but when a story had to go out under the name of the author, and where the manner of the writer had to be preserved, he preferred Stephens' work to his own. What Stephens was thus able to do for Henry Lawson in those early days—and for many another, including 'Steele Rudd' and 'Tom Collins'—was considerable. His encouragement of John Shaw Neilson and Robert Crawford put them on the literary map of Australia."

In the 'eighties improvements in machinery enabled great changes to be made in displaying the news, and both the "Courier" and the "Telegraph" increased in size, occasional supplements being issued. Establishment of the cable service between England and Australia, moreover, offered to newspaper managements the means of keeping their readers more closely informed of events on the other side of the world. The "Courier" management kept pace with world-wide developments in printing machinery and was no whit behind the great Southern newspapers in installing the latest plant. But for a mischance, the "Courier" would have been the first newspaper in Australia to instal linotype machines. The first commercial installation of linotypes was in the composing room of one of the leading New York newspapers in 1888.

The "Courier" Proprietary sent a representative over to the United States as early as 1890 to examine the possibilities of the linotype and other type-setting machines then on the market, and decided to instal some linotypes.

In the early 'nineties, however, it was impossible to secure these machines under any conditions. They were not sold outright, but were merely leased to users by the Mergenthaler Company which would not take the responsibility of extending their system to Aus-

tralia. Early in 1894, the directors of the Brisbane Newspaper Company cabled to New York an order for linotypes. The order, however, was laid in abeyance, but was renewed in the following year. Meanwhile, the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" had cabled for, and obtained, eight linotypes, and to that newspaper belongs the honour of having imported the first linotypes into Australia. Had the original order of the Brisbane Newspaper Company stood, this honour would have belonged to Brisbane. However, in the early months of 1895, eight linotypes were installed in the "Courier" office, and these machines were in continuous use until 1924, when they were replaced by later models.

Editors of the "Courier" from 1894 onwards were: Dr. F. W. Ward, who followed William Kinnaird Rose, had been editor of the Sydney "Daily Telegraph," and later became editor of the "Brisbane Telegraph" and first President of the Queensland Press Institute; C. Brunsdon Fletcher, who succeeded Dr. Ward in 1898, after five years of leader-writing, and remained till 1903 when he became associate editor of the "Sydney Morning Herald," being appointed editor in 1917; E. J. T. Barton, editor of the "Courier" from 5th April 1903 to 5th May 1906. Barton joined the "Courier" as a lad and rose from reporter to chief sub-editor. Spencer Browne says of him that he was a most devoted worker, extremely painstaking, and cared for the "Courier" as for his own conscience.

Later Mr. Barton left the "Courier" and became editor of the "Queensland Sugar Journal," continuing in that post until his death. John J. Knight, as previously mentioned, was editor of the "Courier" from 6th May 1906 to 3rd June 1916. He was succeeded by John Macgregor (from 4th June 1916 to 14th June 1919). He was the second "Courier" editor to go to the "Sydney Morning Herald" as Associate Editor. Richard Sanderson Taylor, who had graduated from law court and parliamentary reporter to leaderwriter, and thence to the editorial chair, was appointed editor of the "Courier" on 15th June 1919, and remained in that position until his death in 1932. Mr. Taylor previously had been associate editor. He was followed by Mr. Firmin M'Kinnon, who needs no introduction to members of the Society. Mr. M'Kinnon did his early journalism on the "Brisbane Telegraph," and was for some years editor of the "Darling Downs Gazette"

in Toowoomba before returning to Brisbane as a member of the "Courier" staff. For several years prior to his appointment as editor, Mr. M'Kinnon had been associate editor to Mr. Taylor. He continued as editor of the "Courier," and subsequently the "Courier-Mail," until the middle of 1934. An outstanding leaderwriter, with a wide knowledge of political affairs, he was also for many years principal book reviewer and literary critic of the "Courier-Mail." He is still associated with the "Courier-Mail" as editor of the house journal.

When I joined the "Courier" in 1922, there was a young man, not long out of the Brisbane Grammar School, employed as a cadet sub-editor. His name was Brian Penton, and he was given his start in journalism by Mr. C. R. J. Dahl, then chief of staff of the "Courier" who retired recently after sixty years of continuous service on the Brisbane "Courier" and "Courier-Mail." Penton left Brisbane about 1925 for the Sydney "Morning Herald," where his marked ability as a descriptive writer attracted the notice of Brunson Fletcher, the editor. After some years in Sydney, Penton went to England, where, after a brief period on the "Daily Express," he became associated with Jack Lindsay, son of Norman Lindsay, on the Fanfrolico Press. Returning to Australia in the early 'thirties, he joined the "Sydney Daily Telegraph," and after a period as special writer, was appointed news editor and later editor, a position which he holds to-day. Penton has written two novels of pioneering Australia, "Landtakers" and "Inheritors." These were intended to be the first two volumes of a trilogy.

A Brisbane journalist in the 'twenties and 'thirties on the old "Daily Mail" and the "Brisbane Telegraph" was Edgar Holt, until recently editor of "Smith's Weekly," and now Public Relations Officer for the Liberal Party in Sydney. Another Brisbane author and journalist is Roy Connolly, author of "Southern Saga." The "Daily Mail," with which the "Courier" merged in 1933, was registered as a newspaper on 14th May 1903, and the first issue was printed on 3rd October of that year. The editor was the late Charles Hardie Buzacott, who had been editor of the "Courier" from 1881 to 1894. The late Dr. (then Mr.) E. W. H. Fowles was his assistant editor. The early years of the "Daily Mail" were strenuous and difficult. The original company went into liquidation and was taken

over by a reorganised company. In May 1915 came another change of ownership, and its later history became one of steady progress. There was intense rivalry between the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail," and the "Courier" in the late 'twenties established a subsidiary company, Courier Aircrafts Ltd., which delivered "Couriers" by air to distant parts of the State and also conveyed passengers. Inspiration of this forward move was the late Mr. J. J. Knight, but the use of air transport was far in advance of its time. To-day, of course, it is a commonplace.

In the great depression of 1929 and subsequent years, the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail" were beset with increasing production problems and rising operating costs, and one morning about the middle of 1933 the Brisbane public was startled to read in the "Brisbane Telegraph" the news that the two Brisbane morning papers were to be merged. Controlling interest in the new paper, known as the "Courier-Mail," was held by Sir Keith Murdoch, chairman of directors of the "Melbourne Herald."

In December 1912, a fourth Brisbane newspaper had made its appearance—the "Daily Standard." Published in the interests of the Labour Party as an evening journal, it was financed largely by contributions from the A.W.U. and other industrial unions. J. B. Sharpe, one-time M.H.R. for Oxley, provided some of the initial capital and was its first manager. In 1913, the unions, mainly the A.W.U., raised sufficient capital to take over entire ownership of the paper. First editor was the late J. V. Macdonald, subsequently Senator Macdonald, who edited the paper for nine years. When he entered the Federal Parliament, Alex. Robertson was appointed to the vacancy and held the position until 1932, when he resigned and transferred to the "Courier" as editor of the "Sports Referee," the Saturday evening sports edition published by the Brisbane Newspaper Co. Ltd. Until some months ago, Alex. Robertson was manager of Station 4BK, the "Courier-Mail" station.

The "Standard" experienced considerable difficulty in keeping afloat. It was not a payable proposition, largely because of insufficient advertising, the life-blood of newspapers, and it failed to receive sufficient public support. Considerable losses were sustained by the unions and on 7th July 1936 it ceased publication.

Its last editor was Frank Burke, to-day manager of the Golden Casket. First site of the "Standard" was Bowman House on the corner of Adelaide and Edward Streets, but subsequently it was shifted to the Worker Building, Dunstan House, in Elizabeth Street. With the demise of the "Standard," the "Telegraph" remained in sole possession of the evening newspaper field, the "Courier" having stopped publication of the "Observer" a couple of years before the merger with the "Daily Mail."

But the "Standard" was not the first Labour newspaper to be published in Brisbane. The "Queensland Worker," a weekly journal which still is being published, had made its appearance on 1st March 1890. It has the distinction of being the first union-owned and Labour-controlled newspaper in Australia. William Lane, of New Australia fame, was credited with being the originator of the proposal and he was its first editor.

Lane had been associated with Gresley Lukin, J. G. Drake, and others on the radical "Boomerang," and he did occasional leaders for the "Courier," but according to Spencer Browne, the bulk of his work for the "Courier" was contributing sketch articles and notes upon Labour ideals.

Spencer Browne, who was a contemporary, comments: "He was a vivid and effective writer, though he was obviously a visionary, and his work was sometimes oversentimentalised. There could be no mistake about his earnestness—I had almost said fanaticism. He was a violent 'dry' in the matter of liquor traffic and a most violent pacifist. From the "Boomerang" he went to the 'Worker,' which was mainly his conception and certainly was founded in the literary sense by him. He wrote always under the pen name of 'John Miller,' yet his identity eventually leaked out, and in the shearers' huts in the West, and on mustering camps, the name of 'Billy Lane' was revered."

Through the columns of the "Boomerang" Lane familiarised the workers of Queensland with the doctrines of Karl Marx, Belfort Bax, Bellamy, and Henry George. A year before establishing the "Worker," Lane had been largely responsible for the formation of the Australian Labour Federation, and he took a leading part in the bitter maritime and pastoral strikes of 1890-91. In 1892 he wrote a book under the nom-

de-guerre of "John Miller"—a novel entitled "The Working Man's Paradise"—to raise funds for men imprisoned as a result of the shearers' strike. Because of his experience in these industrial upheavals, Lane despaired of seeing socialism in his time in Australia. He became fired with the idea of founding an association of socialists pledged to establish a socialist colony in some suitable country overseas. Through the pages of the "Worker" he appealed for volunteers:

"Come together in all unselfishness to trust each other and to be free! To live singly, to work hard, to win, not the gold that poisons, but the home that saves! Come and work as free men for each other, to labour on common land for the common good, and not for self alone, or for the selfish greed of another! One man by himself is powerless, but men in a body are strong."

In 1892, under his leadership, "The New Australia Co-operative Settlement Association" was formed, with headquarters in Sydney, and Lane, with many others, invested his life savings in the establishment of a Socialist colony called New Australia in Paraguay, where the Paraguayan Government had offered the colonists an area of 450,000 acres of agricultural and grazing land for free settlement.

In 1893 Lane, with a large number of followers, including the poetess Mary (now Dame) Gilmore, sailed for Paraguay. Story of the varying fortunes of the Paraguayan colonists does not belong to this paper. Suffice it to say that both the New Australia settlement and the Cosme settlement which broke away from it, were failures. Disillusioned, Lane in 1899 abandoned the project upon which he had set such high hopes, handing over his interests to his brother John. He went to New Zealand and took employment as leader writer with the "New Zealand Herald," devoting his surplus earnings to repaying those who claimed refunds of the original amounts they had invested in the scheme. After a time, he came back to Australia to re-establish the "Sydney Worker." During the South African War at the turn of the century he appears to have been converted to an Imperialistic outlook. This brought him into disfavour with many of his associates, and he returned to New Zealand. At the outbreak of World War I, he was editor of the "New Zealand Herald" and was actively associated with the

Auckland Soldiers' Club. Earlier, he had promoted the National Defence League. He was still paying back claims from seceders from his New Australia venture when he died on 26th August 1917.

To return to the "Worker." Ernest Blackwell replaced Lane as editor, but he also resigned in 1893 and was followed by William Guy Higgs. In 1899, Higgs entered Parliament and his successors were Charles Seymour and Francis Kenna. In 1901, Kenna resigned and Henry E. Boote, a brilliant writer who had been editor of "Gympie Truth," and subsequently edited the "Sydney Worker," took charge. Another fine journalist who was editor of the "Worker" until recent years was the late J. S. Hanlon, who left here to take over the editorship of the "Sydney Worker." He was succeeded by the present editor, Mr. J. M'Carter.

In conclusion, some reference should be made to Hansard, which is published by the Government Printing Office during the sessions of the State Parliament. Hansard came into existence in 1864. In the early 'sixties, the "Courier" printed long reports of the debates in Parliament, often running to seven or eight columns without a single heading to lighten a dead mass of unbroken type.

The reports were so lengthy and crowded out other news to such an extent that a number of leading citizens protested to the editor. As a result, when the second Parliament of Queensland opened in 1864, the speeches of the rank and file were curtailed. This was bitterly resented by the members of the day, and they decided to publish their own journal.

The first Hansard was issued weekly, but in 1876 members aspired even higher. They would be satisfied with nothing less than their own daily newspaper. Hansard was issued as a daily broadsheet under the editorship of William Senior, an expert shorthand reporter, who had been trained in the gallery of the House of Commons.

Thus, Queensland had the distinction of being the first country in the world to issue a daily official Parliamentary report of debates without any form of Government censorship. The daily Hansard was continued until 1893 or 1894 when the practice was abandoned because of the expense of production. The first volume of Hansard covered the period from 20th April to 30th September 1864, and numbered 358

pages, the issue being weekly. The reporting staff then consisted of Edward Deighton and Charles H. Barlee, who were paid £300 for the session, being free during the recess.

In 1866 provision was made for three reporters at £400 each, and this rate of pay continued until the advent of Mr. William Senior on 13th January 1876. The great difficulty of securing competent shorthand reporters led to the formation of a Parliamentary Shorthand Cadet Corps, under the guidance and instruction of Mr. Senior. Senior returned to England about 1892 and resumed literary work on the staff of the "Field." While in Brisbane he was a well known contributor to the "Queenslander" under the title of "Red Spinner," and a writer of short stories.

About fifteen years ago, the State Reporting Bureau was established to provide reporting staffs not only for Hansard but also for the law and arbitration courts and conference gatherings requiring verbatim reports. Present head of the State Reporting Bureau and chief of the Hansard staff under the title of Principal Parliamentary Reporter is Mr. Theo. Wood.

I cannot pretend, even in this lengthy paper, to have covered all the aspects of the subject. Necessarily, much has been omitted, but I have tried to sketch in broad outline the history of the Brisbane Press. While there has been material change in the style and presentation of newspapers through the years, and while the technique and practice of journalism has reached standards undreamed of in the pioneer years when compositors wore top hats to work, the essential principles of responsible journalism have not changed. News gathering facilities because of telephone, wireless, cable, and aeroplane have materially widened, and the latest development is the radio patrol car which enables the cruising police roundsman and other reporters to maintain constant communication with his office. A great modern development has been the broadcasting of news by the radio stations, and the Australian Broadcasting Commission maintains its own news gathering service, employing a staff of trained journalists, who gather and prepare their copy in the same way as newspaper reporters, though necessarily in brief message form. The only difference is that it goes out on the air from the voice of an announcer instead of being printed.